

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2011*

**Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Austin, Texas**  
*May 10, 2011*

*The President.* Hello, Austin! Thank you. Thank you so much. It is good to be back in Austin!

*Audience member.* We love you!

*The President.* I love you back! I love Texas, and I especially love Austin. Love this city. It was always one of my favorite places to visit during the campaign. And I intend to drop by a few more times during this campaign.

Can everybody please give it up for Robert Earl Keen one more time? During the campaign, I was up here, I was singing with some folk, but I kept my day job. *[Laughter]*

It is wonderful to see all of you. I really do just have incredible memories of this city. This may—I think this may be the last time I took a walk, was here in Austin. It was right before a debate, and I started walking down the river, and at the time, nobody quite noticed me. *[Laughter]* And I got pretty far down from the hotel, and then somebody said, "You're Obama, aren't you?" *[Laughter]* And that was it. *[Laughter]* Secret Service started coming around and—but I had wonderful memories of this place, and I have so many good friends here. It is great to see all of you.

It is also great to be out of Washington, DC. Now, don't get me wrong, DC is a wonderful town. But the conversation in Washington——

*[At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.]*

*The President.* Did somebody fall? *[Laughter]* You guys all right? Those photographers are incorrigible. *[Laughter]* The conversation you hear in Washington is just very different from the conversation you'd hear around the kitchen table or around the office coolers. And that's why we recently decided our reelection campaign will be the first one in modern history to be based out of Washington, DC. We're going back to Chicago. We are going back to Chicago. I was thinking about coming to Austin, but I had to go home.

Because I don't want our campaign to only be hearing from pundits and lobbyists and political insiders. I want our campaign to be hearing from the folks who got me to the Oval Office. I want to be hearing from you. I want to make sure we're putting the campaign in your hands, the hands of the same organizers, the same volunteers, the same ordinary people who did extraordinary things the last time around. That's what this campaign is still about.

Now, I'll confess a few things have changed since that time. A few of us are a little bit older. Some of us are a lot grayer. *[Laughter]* But all of us, I hope, can still remember that night in Grant Park, the excitement in the streets, the sense of possibility in the air. And I hope you also remember what I said back then, that that wasn't an ending, that was just the beginning. It was just the beginning of what we knew was going to be a steep climb.

Now, I confess I didn't know how steep it was going to be. *[Laughter]* It turned out we took office in the middle of the worst recession in our lifetimes, one that left millions of Americans without jobs, hundreds of thousands without homes. It was a recession that's so bad that a lot of families are still dealing with the aftershocks to this day.

And so coming in, we immediately had to take a bunch of tough decisions. And they were not always popular. But 2½ years later, an economy that was shrinking at about 6 percent is now growing again. Over the last 3 months—just the last 3 months alone, we've added about a quarter—about three-quarters of a million private sector jobs just in the last 3 months. Over the last 14 months, we've added more than 2 million private sector jobs to our economy.

Some of the things that folks said wouldn't work, they've worked. Remember our intervention in the auto industry when a whole bunch of folks were saying, let it go by the wayside? GM is now hiring back all of its workers. All of the Big Three automakers are expecting to make a profit again.

So we've made progress, but we still got some climbing to do, so don't take off your boots. [Laughter] Because the summit we want to reach is one where every child in America has opportunity. It's one where we're looking out for one another, whether we're poor or disabled or infirm or in our golden years. It's one where America is more prosperous than ever before and all Americans are sharing in that prosperity. That's the summit we want to reach. And it's going to take more than a couple years to get there. In fact, it's going to take more than one term to get there. It's going to take more than one term.

And I'm reminded every night when I—some of you know I get letters from all across the country, and I read 10 of them every night. And I get letters from people who are really working hard, doing everything right, but they can barely afford to keep up, barely keep their families afloat. You get a letter from somebody who has sent out 50 resumes and hasn't gotten an answer back. You get a letter from a child who says their parents are having to sell their homes—"Mr. President, is there anything you can do?"

Those are the Americans I'm thinking about every day when I wake up in the morning and every night when I go to bed. And they're the reason you elected me President. You didn't elect me President for a fancy title or a nice place to live, you elected me to bring about real change in the lives of people all across this country and make sure everybody is getting a fair shot at the American Dream. That's why you elected me.

And because of you, we've made great progress. I want you to remember that. We have made incredible progress. Sometimes, folks forget. Progress shouldn't make us complacent, but it should remind us that change is possible.

*Audience member.* Thank you for getting bin Laden.

*The President.* Well, there you go. Case in point. It should inspire us to finish what we started. Because of you, we were able to prevent a second great depression. But in the next few weeks, in the next few months, the next few years, we have to make sure that the new jobs and industries of our time are created right here in the United States of America. We have to make sure that America is prepared to win the future.

Because of you, we've ended taxpayer subsidies that were going to banks under the student loan program. We're taking that money, billions of dollars, and making college more affordable for millions more students, including those right here in Austin at UT—[applause]—including right here.

We've raised standards for teaching and learning in schools across the country by launching something we call Race to the Top. We've got to keep on going, though. Our reforms are not done. I want every child in Texas and every child in America ready to graduate, ready to go to college, and actually able to afford going to college. That's how we're going to out-

compete and out-educate the rest of the world. That's how America will succeed in the 21st century. Because of you, we made the largest investment in clean energy, renewable energy in our history, investments that are already creating new jobs and new businesses.

But we've got more work to do. Some of you may have noticed gas prices are a little high. And with all the instability around the world, we've got to keep making those investments in alternative energy. And to help pay for it, by the way, because we've got to worry about our fiscal situation, it's time to eliminate the \$4 billion in taxpayer subsidies that we're giving to oil and gas companies, Four billion dollars of your money that they're making for record profits while you're struggling at the tank. Instead of subsidizing yesterday's energy sources, let's invest in tomorrow's energies.

Because of you, we're putting hundreds of thousands of people back to work repairing crumbling roads and bridges, our infrastructure. But now we've got to make sure America is built to compete in the 21st century—not just new roads and bridges, but high-speed rail lines and high-speed internet. We always used to have the best stuff. Texas knows something about that. But today, South Korea has faster high-speed Internet than we do. China has got high-speed rail. It doesn't have to be that way. We created the Internet. Austin knows a little bit about the high-tech industry. We should be leading the world when it comes to cutting-edge technologies and innovation.

Because of you, we did what we've been trying to do for almost a century: We said health care should no longer be a privilege, it should be a right in this country. Everybody should get affordable health care in this country. They said we couldn't get it—couldn't do it, and we did it. We said in the United States of America, you should never go broke because somebody in your family gets sick.

Because of you, we passed Wall Street reform that helps make sure you aren't cheated when you apply for a mortgage or take out a credit card, and we don't have to bail out banks anymore. We passed a law that says women should get an equal day's pay for an equal day's work. And while we were at it, we put two more women on the Supreme Court, including the first Latina.

Because of you, we overturned "don't ask, don't tell" so everybody in this country can serve the country they love. We removed a hundred thousand troops from Iraq. We ended combat missions there, just like I promised we would. We're taking the fight to Al Qaida. And because of the extraordinary bravery of the men and women who wear this Nation's uniform and the outstanding work of our intelligence agencies, Usama bin Laden will never again threaten the United States of America. We couldn't be prouder of them.

But we've still got more work to do. We've still got more work to do when it comes to keeping America safe and making sure America is prosperous. We've got to move forward on a whole bunch of challenges that are still facing this Nation.

I was just down in El Paso before I came here. And we needed to——

*Audience members.* Whoo!

*The President.* Yes, it's a nice place, El Paso. [*Laughter*] And I talked about how we need to confront the challenge of immigration and pass comprehensive immigration reform that upholds our tradition as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. We can do that.

We've got to break the cycle of one energy crisis after another and bring about real energy reform that grows our economy. I know oil is big in Texas, and that's fine. We've got as much

production going on as we have since 2003 right here in the United States of America. But we only have 3 percent of the world's oil reserves; we use 25 percent of the world's oil. We're going to have to free ourselves from the grip of foreign oil, and we can clean up the planet in the process if we make the investments in basic research that are necessary. We want to leave America better off than we got.

So ultimately, that's what this budget debate in Washington is all about. It's about who we are. It's not just about numbers. It's about our values, what we care about, the kind of country we believe in.

Now, I believe in an America where Government lives within its means. We need to cut spending in Washington. We need to cut domestic spending, defense spending, health care spending, spending in our Tax Code. We've got to eliminate every dime of waste. And if we're serious about taking responsibility for the debt we owe, then we've got to make some tough decisions about the things that we can afford to do without.

We all need to share in the sacrifice, but we're not going to reduce our deficit by sacrificing the things that have always made us prosper. I'm not going to sacrifice our investment in education. I will not sacrifice scholarships to students. I will not sacrifice medical research for our scientists. I will not sacrifice our highways and our airports, making sure they're safe. I will not sacrifice investments in clean energy at a time when our dependence on foreign oil is causing folks so much pain at the pump. I'm not going to sacrifice America's future.

If we want to reduce our deficit, our sacrifice has to be shared. And that means even as we're making spending cuts, we also have to end the tax cuts to the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans in this country. It's not because we want to punish success. It's because if we're going to ask Americans to sacrifice a little bit, we can't tell millionaires and billionaires that they don't have to do a thing.

I don't want a \$200,000 tax cut that's paid for by asking 33 seniors each to pay more than \$6,000 in extra Medicare costs. I don't want that. I don't want my tax cut paid for by cutting kids out of Head Start or doing away with health insurance for millions of people on Medicaid, seniors in nursing homes and poor children and middle class families who are raising a child with a disability like autism. That's not a tradeoff I'm willing to make.

And I don't believe that's a tradeoff that most Americans are willing to make, no matter what party you belong to. It's not who we are as a country. We're better than that. See, what makes America great is not just the scale of our skyscrapers, the might of our military, the size of our GDP. What also makes us great is the character of our people.

We're rugged individualists, especially here in Texas. We're self-reliant. We don't like being told what to do. We believe each of us is endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights and liberties. That's part of what makes us American. We're proud of that.

But what also makes us American is the idea that we're all in it together, that I am my brother's keeper, that I am my sister's keeper, and that when I look out for somebody else, it's not out of charity. It's because my life is better. My life is richer. Because I'm driving down in Austin and I see some kids playing, I know they're in a good school. And I see some seniors taking a walk together holding hands, I know that they've got some security. And if I go by a small-business owner, I know that they've got opportunity. That's—that makes my life better, when I know that the people around me have some measure of security and dignity and a shot at the American Dream.

That's our vision of America. It's not a vision of a small America. It's a vision of a big America, a bold and optimistic America, an America that does big things. It's a vision where we're living within our means but we're still investing in our future; where everybody is making sacrifices, but nobody alone bears all the burden; where we live up to the idea that no matter who you—what you look like or who you are, no matter whether your ancestors landed on Ellis Island or came over here on a slave ship or crossed the Rio Grande, that we're all connected to one another and that we rise or fall together.

That's the idea at the heart of America. That's the idea at the heart of this campaign. And that's why, Austin, I'm going to need your help more than ever. This campaign is still in the early stages. But now is the time where you can help shape this campaign, just like you did the first time, make sure we get out of the gate strong.

And I know there are times where some of you have felt frustrated because we haven't gotten everything done as fast as you want or exactly the way you wanted it. I know. [Laughter] I know those conversations you have with your friends. [Laughter] "Oh, why is Obama compromising with the Republicans?" "Why haven't we gotten judges appointed faster?" "Why didn't we get a public option?" You know, I know—all the grumbling. [Laughter]

And there are times where I get frustrated, but we knew this wasn't going to be easy. We knew that on a journey like this, there were going to be setbacks and detours and at times we would stumble. You know, I'm—I always laugh when people say, "Boy, you know, the Obama campaign back in 2008, that was just so smooth and flawless." And I'm thinking, what campaign were they looking at? [Laughter] We screwed up all the time during our campaign. [Laughter] We made mistakes. We lost all kinds of primaries and caucuses, and there were all kinds of times where I said things that I wish I hadn't or didn't say things I wish I had. That's life.

But you guys stuck with me because you knew that at each and every juncture in our history, when our future is on the line, when our country is at a crossroads, like we are now, we can come together and we can do big things. And we somehow have managed to transform ourselves from just this ragtag band of colonies to the greatest country in the world.

We took an agricultural economy and transformed it into an industrial economy, then into an information economy. And we absorbed new waves of immigrants. And we finally dealt with the stain of slavery, and we made sure that women could participate fully in our democracy. And we made sure that workers had basic rights. And we managed to do this, to move forward, not as Republicans or Democrats, but as Americans, as one people, as one nation.

So whenever you hear people saying that our problems now are too big to solve or we can't bring about the change that we were talking about or, boy, politics is so nasty, whenever cynicism rears its ugly head, I want you to think about all the progress we've made already. I want you to think how unlikely it was the first time around. I want you to think about all the unfinished business that lies ahead. And I want to—I want you to remember—and I want you to remind everybody else—those three simple words that summed up our last campaign and that will sum up our spirit as a people: Yes we can.

Thank you very much everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. God bless Texas. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:49 p.m. at the Moody Theater. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Robert Earl Keen; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist

organization, who was killed in a U.S. Navy SEALs counterterrorism operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 1.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee fundraiser in Austin, TX.

*Locations:* Austin, TX.

*Names:* bin Laden, Usama; Kagan, Elena; Keen, Robert Earl; Sotomayor, Sonia M.

*Subjects:* Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal; Aviation : Airport improvement projects; Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Improvement; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Civil rights : Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009; Communications : Broadband technology; Deaths : bin Laden, Usama; Defense, Department of : Funding; Democratic Party : Democratic National Committee; Economy, national : Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans, elimination of subsidies to private providers; Education : Standards and school accountability; Education : Teachers; Education, Department of : Funding; Education, Department of : Race to the Top Fund; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job losses; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Domestic sources; Energy : Foreign sources; Energy : Gasoline, oil, and natural gas costs; Energy : National energy policy; Energy : Oil and gas industry :: Subsidies, elimination; Environment : Quality and improvement efforts; Health and Human Services, Department of : Funding; Health and Human Services, Department of : Head Start programs; Health and medical care : Cost control reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Health and medical care : Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Health and medical care : Research and development; Housing : Housing market :: Decline; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Science and technology : Research and development; Supreme Court : Associate Justice; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Texas : Democratic Party events; Texas : President's visit; Transportation : High-speed rail lines, development and expansion; Transportation : Highway system, modernization efforts; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts.

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